AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Figures 13a and 13b labeled "PRIOR ART"

Enclosure(s): 1 Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Dealing with initial matters first, Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement of December 20, 2005.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings, asserting that Figures 13a and 13b should be labeled as "PRIOR ART". Applicants have amended the drawings accordingly.

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure as being too long and in improper format. Accordingly, Applicants submit a new Abstract of the Disclosure.

Claims 1-12 are pending in the application and have been rejected on reference grounds. In particular, claims 1-5 have been are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kawamura (Japanese Patent No. 2000-261932). Additionally, claims 6-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maroschak (U.S. Patent No. 3,877,831). For the following rejections, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Beginning with the rejection of claims 1-5, claim 1 is directed to a corrugated tube including a tubular body have large-diameter and small-diameter portions which are alternately arranged and a longitudinal slit which is formed along a generating line of the tube body. According to the invention recited in claim 1, a communication hole is formed in the peripheral surface of the body by cutting a part of the larger-diameter portion over a predetermined length in the circumferential direction of the tube. According to amended claim 1, "the communication hole is formed to include a part of each of vertical wall portions each formed between the larger-diameter portion and a respective one of the smaller-diameter portions disposed respectively on opposite sides of the larger-diameter portion in the circumferential direction." In contrast, in JP '932, the communication hole (15a) is formed to include a part of just one side of the partial wall portions (13). See Fig. 5. The claimed arrangement provide more effective discharge of the

condensation water. Thus, it is submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4 patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Turning to the rejection of claims 6-12. Claim 6 is an apparatus claim with claims 7-10 depending therefrom and claim 11 is a method claim, that substantially mirrors apparatus claim 6, with claim 12 depending from claim 11. For the following reasons, Applicants traverse the rejection of these claims.

First, the Examiner contends that the cutting station 60 of Maroschak corresponds to the claimed slit former of the claimed present invention. This however is not the case. In particular, the cutting station 60 of Maroschak merely cuts the corrugated plastic tube into predetermined lengths by cutting the tubes in a transverse direction, as clearly shown by the cutting blade 61 and as discussed in column 5, lines 23-27 ("saw 61 severs tube T into predetermined lengths in response to predetermined linear movement of the tube T forwardly of molding machine 30"). In contrast, the slit former 51 forms a longitudinal slit in the tube body which is clearly difference from that which is taught or even suggested by Maroschak. It is noted that Applicants have amended independent claims 6 and 11 to make it clear that the slit is a longitudinal slit. On this basis alone, Applicants submit that claims 6 and 11 patentably distinguish over Maroschak.

Moreover, although the Examiner asserts that Maroschak teaches the claimed tube guide, Applicants respectfully disagree. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that the tension sensing device 40 of Maroschak corresponds to the claimed tube guide 40. Indeed, the Examiner states that Maroschak discloses "a tube guide (40) which is provided upstream side (sic) of the slit former (60) in a opposite (sic) moving direction of the tube body of the corrugated tube (T) and is fitted into the tube body moving in a direction along the generating line (Fig. 1)." This statement by the Examiner is simply inaccurate.

As noted above, reference numeral 40 in Maroschak is a tension sensing device which includes a feeler element 41 that contacts the outside of a corrugated tube as discussed in column 4, lines 52+. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Maroschak does not teach or suggest "a tube guide which is provided at a downstream side of the slit former in a moving direction of the tube body of the corrugated tube, and it is fitted into the tube body and the slit to support the tube body in such a manner that the tube body is movable in a direction along the generating line," as recited in claim 6. Correspondingly, the reference does not teach or suggest the fitting step recited in claim 11 of "fitting a tube guide into the tube body and the slit to support the tube body in such a manner that the tube body is movable in a direction along the generating line." Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 6-12 patentably distinguish over the prior art as well.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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